1	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
2	FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA
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4	ALICE SHACKELFORD
5	Plaintiff, No. CIV-18-0456-HE
6	VS.
7	AMERICAN INCOME LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
8	Defendant.
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11	
12	DEPOSITION OF
13	STEVEN PLITT, ESQ.
14	
15	July 24, 2019
16	10:00 a.m.
17	
18	1850 North Central Avenue Suite 2400
19	Phoenix, Arizona
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24	
25	Talia Douglas, RPR, CR No. 50775

- 1 transcripts. We know it was effectively -- well, we know
- 2 it was -- I don't want to use the word effectively because
- 3 I can't evaluate that. That's an evaluative term.
- 4 It was communicated to the claim environment
- 5 in 2001. It's a rarely used exclusion. So we don't know
- 6 how often it was reiterated in the claim environment. We
- 7 do know that three individuals had a different view -- four
- 8 individuals had a different view of that exclusion at the
- 9 time of Ms. Shackelford's claim.
- 10 So either they were instructed on it and
- 11 didn't get it or they were not instructed on it when their
- 12 tenure started at the company.
- 13 I can't answer that, but I can tell you that
- 14 the four people -- Robles, Webb, Johnson and Lindsey -- had
- 15 the consistent view that was inconsistent with the
- 16 historical perspective.
- 17 Q. So we can agree that every individual in the
- 18 claims environment that had a role in handing Ms.
- 19 Shackelford's claim did not know and understand American
- 20 Income's historical means of interpreting the drug use
- 21 exclusion, true?
- MS. TERRY: Object to the form.
- 23 THE WITNESS: Let me preface -- yes, but let
- 24 me preface it with this.
- 25 What we have been talking about generally



- 1 about effective communication, kind of the process the
- 2 claim, is more in a generalized sense, not specific as
- 3 we're now talking.
- 4 It's understandable why an exclusion that
- 5 occurs so rarely doesn't get communicated on a regular
- 6 basis to the claim environment as what you would call an
- 7 implementation.
- 8 So that's not what I was talking about when
- 9 we were talking more generically about implementation claim
- 10 processes.
- 11 What I'm talking about is levels of
- 12 authority. How do you process, who do you go to, to
- 13 process, things like that. That's what the industry
- 14 standard requires. Claim specific, it's variable.
- 15 Having said that, those four individuals were
- 16 out of sync with what the historical perspective was.
- 17 BY MR. ROWE:
- 18 Q. Acting as an expert witness in a case as in a
- 19 lawyer -- or acting as an expert witness in an insurance
- 20 case as a practitioner of the law, as a lawyer, can
- 21 sometimes be tricky, correct?
- MS. TERRY: Object to the form.
- THE WITNESS: I don't know.
- 24 BY MR. ROWE:
- 25 Q. Well -- and I'm not --



- 1 Q. -- right? 2. And that standard was not met here, true? 3 Well, in three instances, not only by industry 4 standard, by express -- by the actual process itself that 5 had been adopted, there was supposed to be communication from the POS to the claim environment of some form to 6 7 indicate that there was an issue or a problem or what the substance of the conversation was from Ms. Shackelford. 8 An insurance company must know and understand the 9 Q. 10 law of the jurisdictions in which it sells policies as it 11 relates to the policies that they sell, true? In a general way, but not -- we can agree to 12 Α. 13 disagree on how specific that needs to be. 14 Because, as an example, insurance companies 15 don't know every case that comes out. They don't monitor every single case that comes out of the court in their 16 17 jurisdiction. 18 They don't do those kinds of things, and 19 they're not required to do those kind of things. And it's 20 not industry standard, but they can't ignore information that they have about the law. 21 22 And generally speaking, they need to have an 23 understanding of the law relating to their policies, but it
 - doesn't get like you or I as a lawyer might know. That's why they call lawyers in the jurisdiction and say, what



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- Steven Price 5:18-cv-00456-HE Doctyment 26492 Filed 01/22/20 Page 5 of 5 1 about this, what about that. 2. Q. Sure. 3 And they call lawyers because the industry 4 standard is that an insurance company has a knowledge and 5 understanding of the law as it pertains to the policies that they're selling in the jurisdictions in which they 6 7 sell these policies --8 Α. In a --9 Q. -- true? 10 -- general sense, that is true, but it is not 11 specific enough to be, I know of all of these cases. going to research all of these cases. That typically 12 13 doesn't happen in real time. 14 Q. Sure. 15 There's a reasonableness component involved 16 in all of these rules --17 Α. Yes. 18 -- right? Q. 19 And an insurance company will not and no
 - 20 entity will ever know the minutia of every aspect of law
 - that pertains to their business. 21
 - 22 But there's a reasonable expectation that
 - 23 they know the important aspects of the law and the
 - 24 principles underlying the law, correct?
 - 25 Α. Yes.

